CTE END-OF-PROGRAM (EOP) ASSESSMENT ONLINE IT REQUIREMENTS

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

CTE EOP Assessments are administered using the online assessment system, E-SESS, through Pitsco Education. Please review the following technical specifications provided by Pitsco Education, Career and Technical Education Consortium of States (CTECS) and Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to ensure a smooth testing experience. District Assessment Coordinators (DAC), Building Assessment Coordinators (BAC) and Principals should communicate with Building and District Technology Coordinators to confirm all guidelines in this document are addressed.

Browser: The testing program is supported in Chrome, Edge, Firefox and Safari.

KDE Specific Browser Update:

- Firefox or Chrome are preferred on Mac OS. An issue has been reported with Safari in the past.

- Chrome is preferred on Windows.

Other browsers beyond what is listed above may work, but the specified browsers are the only versions actively tested and supported. We will try to help with any other browsers or older versions but offer no guarantees. Bandwidth may be an issue if it's not "dedicated." A school may have 5 T1s, but if they have 50 students in the library streaming videos, the entire pipe is going to be used. The bandwidth estimation of this requirement is based on 150-200 students simultaneously taking the assessment on a dedicated T1 and experiencing no delays.

Reporting: In some cases, in-browser reports are augmented with spreadsheets and/or PDF documents. Excel (or compatible) and a PDF reader (such as Acrobat Reader) are optional, but not required.

Audio: Using the audio feature requires additional bandwidth; you may notice slower response times during testing. CTECS recommends using wired computer internet connections, if possible. Audio is played using HTML 5 technology.

Display Properties: The testing program is best viewed at 1024 x 768 display resolution or higher. It will work at 800 x 600.

Memory: There are no specific requirements for the CPU, RAM, etc. If the machine will run the browser, the E-SESS application will run.

Proxy Server Settings: Make sure that the proxy server will not cache Techfluency.org. Responses must be sent directly to the E-SESS server. Do not begin testing students until proxy server settings allow communication to flow to and from E-SESS. <u>Otherwise, the students will finish the test and receive a 0 score.</u>

Be sure to take the sample test (refer to next section) to test your devices and system. The timer (clock) should display correctly on the screen; if not, there is a problem and students cannot test until it is resolved.

Sample Test: Access the sample test at each location before students begin testing. This ensures that there are no proxy servers preventing access to the site, no software packages preventing cookies/sessions from being stored, etc. The sample test may be accessed multiple times by individual users.

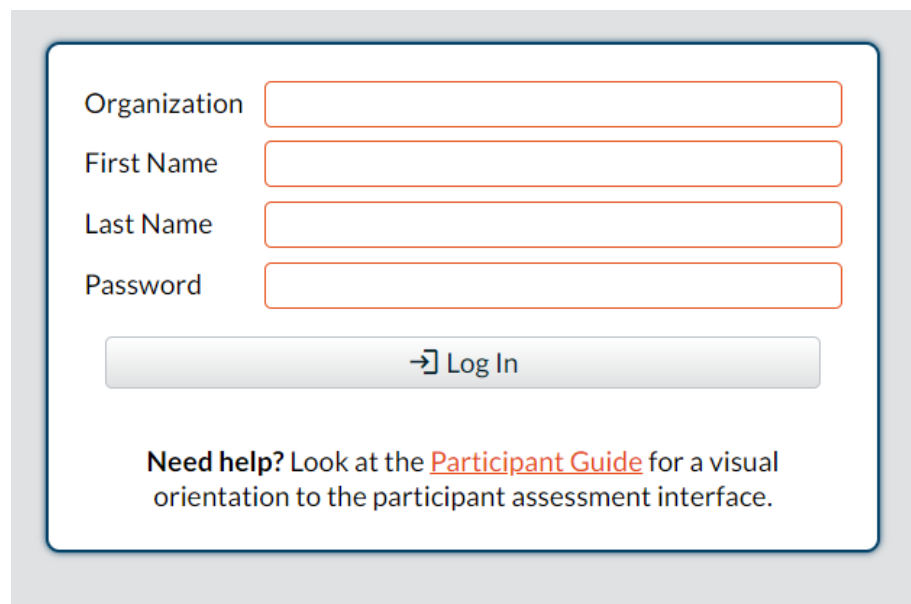**To access the sample CTE EOP Assessment test:**

1. Go to www.techfluency.org/esess/

2. Make the following entries into the four blanks:

    Organization: KYEOP

    First Name: Sample

    Last Name: Sample

    Password: Sample

3. Click **Log In**.

4. Click **Continue**.

5. Click **Begin**.

NOTE: At least one graphic should be visible, and the timer should be visible and clearly readable throughout the test.

Firewalls and server settings: Ensure www.techfluency.org and any subdomains are not blocked.

The only exception will be images and audio (text-to-speech feature) used on the tests. The images are hosted on Amazon's S3 servers. Server name: media.techfluency.org

Add Server name: "techfluency.org" to the permit lists on the firewalls, internet filters and proxies.

District Guidelines for Network Activity Moratorium During Online Testing:

The following is a list of recommended best practices for district technology personnel to have in place during scheduled online testing windows in their district.

Use of these recommendations will greatly improve the testing experience for the students and reduce or eliminate possible activity that could impede the online testing system. These guidelines apply to all online tests. They were specifically designed to focus on best practices and lessons learned from past testing sessions.

Most Importantly:

Communicate with the DAC or ATC Principal to make sure you have these guidelines in place to meet their scheduled tests.

During Testing Windows:

1. Disable wireless guest networks
2. If a district has routers within their LAN, establish QOS rules to prioritize access to testing sites
3. Whitelist testing sites "techfluency.org" (Proxy/Internet Filter)
4. Restrict or ban certain network activity during testing window. This should include:
   a. Video streaming (YouTube, Discovery, Netflix, Hulu, Hudi, etc.)
   b. Audio streaming (Pandora, iHeartRadio, Slacker, etc.)
   c. Large data moves or backup/restoration projects
   d. Alterations to LAN network equipment
   e. Removal or additions to network LAN
   f. System updates (OS Updates, Patches, Software Updates, etc.). These should be rescheduled, after the testing window
   g. App updates or downloads. These should be scheduled for after the testing window
   h. Video conferencing

IT TIPS AND SOLUTIONS

The students are using an online assessment tool called E-SESS. The website is www.techfluency.org. Below are some problems you might experience during online testing. Please check this list to the best of your abilities before proceeding. If this does not appear to be the problem, then escalate the problem appropriately.

If you must escalate the problem, please have the following information available:

- Browser name and version (e.g., Chrome, Edge, Firefox)
- What time the problem began and if it is still currently going on.
- Is your lab running on wireless, or are the computers physically connected to the network?

If the students are having general connection issues, check the following:

- If possible, check the packet loss in the lab.
- Perform a traceroute to www.techfluency.org to see if the connection to E-SESS is OK and packet loss ("No Reply" or "Host Unreachable") is minimal.

Next, refer to the following troubleshooting steps:

1. The test will not load at all. The student clicks the Begin button, but the page never opens.
   a. Check the firewall and/or proxy server to see if www.techfluency.org or any subdomains are blocked.
   b. Close all open browser windows (even any minimized ones). Try again. It is possible for the test to already be open and minimized, or for an open window to prevent the test from opening.
2. The student clicks Begin, and the page opens, but the assessment never appears.
   a. Check the browser version. The assessment program is supported in Chrome, Edge, Firefox, and Safari.
      - **Firefox or Chrome are preferred on Mac OS.** An issue has been reported with Safari in the past.
      - **Chrome is preferred on Windows.**
   b. Try closing the assessment and click Begin again.
   c. Check for any specific errors showing up and contact CTECS with the exact error message.
3. "The students keep getting disconnected." The message on the screen should be something like "Please wait while your test is being loaded. The connection to the server has slowed or stopped…"
   a. A background request to E-SESS may have failed. This could be due to server packet loss on an overloaded network. When the student begins the assessment, it will download about 1+MB, but the typical transaction after that is less than 10K, so it doesn't require much bandwidth. You might also check to see if a firewall or proxy server is blocking communication with www.techfluency.org.

b. If the computer seems acceptable, try a connection speed test, such as http://speedtest.net. Run the test to see if the numbers are abnormally low. Check the browser to be sure that it is adequately responsive when changing to other sites, such as the local school website.

4. The test is going really slow. Each question takes more than ten seconds to load.

   a. This is most likely the computer itself, *as all items are loaded in the background before the first item is presented*. Try moving the student to another available computer/device for testing.

If you have any technical concerns prior to testing, please contact:

CTECS Testing Technical Support:
(available Monday – Friday 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM ET)

Tim Withee
(404) 994-6535
twithee@ctecs.org

Robyn Marshall
(678) 226-9000 or (404) 994-6534
rmarshall@ctecs.org

E-SESS Technical Support:
(available Monday – Friday 7:00 AM CT / 8:00 AM ET – 5:00 PM CT / 6:00 PM ET)

E-SESS Support
800-774-4552
esess@pitsco.com

Darris Lassiter
800-774-4552
dlassiter@pitsco.com